IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application.

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method <u>for identifying synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated topic of interest, the computer-implemented method</u> comprising ~~the steps of~~:

<u>receiving a topic of interest and associated information from a first user on a user interface on a first computer</u> ~~enabling one or more users to declare, and associate information with, one or more topics, wherein the associated information for a declared topic comprises at least one of a topic description, or one or more keywords relating to the topic~~;

storing <u>the received topic of interest</u> ~~declared topics~~ and ~~their~~ <u>the</u> associated information <u>on a storage medium in communication with the first computer</u>;

monitoring computing activities of a <u>second</u> user <u>by a software monitoring module</u>;

determining if the <u>second</u> user appears to be interested in a ~~declared~~ <u>the received</u> topic based on the monitored activities <u>of the second user</u> and based on the ~~declared topic's~~ associated information; and

notifying the <u>second</u> user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic if it appears that the <u>second</u> user is interested in the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~step of~~ monitoring the computing activities of the <u>second</u> user comprises ~~the step of~~ monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the <u>second</u> user.

3.   (Cancelled)

4.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the ~~step of~~ monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the <u>second</u> user comprises ~~the step of~~ retrieving from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the <u>second</u> user and/or sent by the <u>second</u> user and examining the contents of those e-mail messages.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~step of~~ monitoring the computing activities of the <u>second</u> user comprises ~~the step of~~ examining one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the <u>second</u> user.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~step of~~ monitoring the computing activities of the <u>second</u> user comprises ~~the step of~~ monitoring one or more search request messages sent from the <u>second</u> user.

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:
      determining whether the <u>second</u> user desires to receive information about the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic after notifying the <u>second</u> user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic.

9-11. (Cancelled)

12.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:
      determining whether the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to a group e-mail address and/or virtual team associated with the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic;
      adding the <u>second</u> user to the group e-mail address if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and
      adding the <u>second</u> user to the virtual team if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the virtual team.

13.   (Cancelled)

14.   (Currently Amended) A system <u>for identifying synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated topic of interest, the system</u> comprising:

a user interface on a first computer configured to receive a topic of interest and associated information from a first user ~~means for enabling one or more users to declare, and associate information with, one or more topics, wherein associated information for a declared topic comprises at least one of a topic description, or one or more keywords relating to the topic~~;

a storage device in communication with the first computer and configured to store the received topic ~~means for storing declared topics~~ and ~~their~~ associated information;

a software monitoring module configured to monitor ~~monitoring means for monitoring~~ computing activities of a second user;

a determination module configured to determine ~~determining means for determining~~ if the second user appears to be interested in ~~a declared~~ the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and based on the ~~declared topic's~~ associated information; and

a notification module configured to notify ~~notifying means for notifying~~ the second user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ received topic if it appears that the second user is interested in the ~~declared~~ received topic.

15.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the software monitoring ~~means~~ module is configured to ~~comprises means for~~ monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user.

16.   (Cancelled)

17.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the ~~means for~~ software monitoring module that is configured to monitor one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user ~~comprises means for retrieving~~ is further configured to retrieve from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the second user and/or sent by the second user and ~~for examining~~ to examine the contents of those e-mail messages.

18.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the <u>software</u> monitoring <u>module is configured to examine</u> ~~means comprises means for examining~~ one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the <u>second</u> user.

19.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the <u>software</u> monitoring <u>module is configured to monitor</u> ~~means comprises means for monitoring~~ one or more search request messages sent from the <u>second</u> user.

20.   (Cancelled)

21.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, further comprising:

        <u>a determination module configured to determine</u> ~~determining means for determining~~ whether the <u>second</u> user desires to receive information about the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic after notifying the <u>second</u> user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic.

22-24. (Cancelled)

25.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

        <u>a determination module configured to determine</u> ~~determining means for determining~~ whether the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to a group e-mail address and/or virtual team associated with the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic;

        <u>an e-mail additional module configured to add</u> ~~means for adding~~ the <u>second</u> user to the group e-mail address if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and

        <u>a virtual team modification module configured to add</u> ~~means for adding~~ the <u>second</u> user to the virtual team if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the virtual team.

26.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product <u>for identifying synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common</u>

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user-generated topic of interest, the computer-implemented method, the computer program product being embodied in a computer readable medium and comprising computer instructions for:

receiving a topic of interest and associated information from a first user on a user interface on a first computer ~~enabling one or more users to declare, and associate information with, one or more topics, wherein associated information for a declared topic comprises at least one of a topic description, or one or more keywords relating to the topic~~;

storing the received topic ~~declared topics~~ and their the associated information on a storage medium in communication with the first computer;

monitoring computing activities of a second user by a software monitoring module;

determining if the second user appears to be interested in ~~a declared~~ the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and based on the ~~declared topic's~~ associated information; and

notifying the second user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ received topic if it appears that the second user is interested in the ~~declared~~ received topic.

27.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the instructions for monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises instructions for monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user.

28.   (Cancelled)

29.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 27, wherein instructions for monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user comprises instructions for retrieving from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the second user and/or sent by the second user and examining the contents of those e-mail messages.

30.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein instructions for monitoring the computing activities of the <u>second</u> user comprises instructions for examining one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the <u>second</u> user.

31.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 26, wherein instructions for monitoring the computing activities of the <u>second</u> user comprises instructions for monitoring one or more search request messages sent from the <u>second</u> user.

32.   (Cancelled)

33.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 26, further comprising instructions for:

        determining whether the <u>second</u> user desires to receive information about the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic after notifying the <u>second</u> user of the existence of the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic.

34-36. (Cancelled)

37.   (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 26, further comprising instructions for:

        determining whether the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to a group e-mail address and/or virtual team associated with the ~~declared~~ <u>received</u> topic;

        adding the <u>second</u> user to the group e-mail address if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and

        adding the <u>second</u> user to the virtual team if it is determined that the <u>second</u> user selected to be added to the virtual team.

38.   (New) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the associated information is selected from the group consisting of: a name of the topic, a description of the topic, one or more keywords related to the topic, the name of the first user; a reason for entering the topic, an access limitation on the topic, an expiration date associated

with the topic, a name of a group e-mail address, a name of a virtual team workspace, a link to an electronic bulletin board and a link to a web page.

39.   (New) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, further comprising:
        creating a group e-mail address, a virtual tem workspace, or both if the topic and the associated information is received from the first user.

40.   (New) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, further comprising:
        determining if the second user is authorized to be notified of the topic.

41.   (New) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the software monitoring module is located on a computer of the second user, on a network node in communication with the computer of the second user, or on a server in communication with the computer of the second user.

42.   (New) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, further comprising:
        monitoring computing activities of a third user by the software monitoring module;
        determining if the third user appears to be interested in the topic based on the monitored activities of the third user and based on the associated information; and
        notifying the third user of the existence of the topic if it appears that the third user is interested in the topic.